AN ORIGINAL

ESSAY

ON

WOMAN.

Price Two Shillings and Six-Pence.

Montague (M. P.)
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10.

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ON

WOMAN,

IN

FOUR EPISTLES.

WRITTEN BY

A LADY.

LONDON:

Printed by A. BRIDGMAN, at No. 3. in *Playhouſe-Yard, Blackfryars*;

And ſold by JOHN SWAN, oppoſite *Norfolk Street*, in the *Strand*.

M,DCC,LXXI.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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Printed by W. Bowman, at No. 3, in Elliot's Row, Moorfields;

And Sold by John Swan, opposite Newgate Street, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXXI.

THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Author, fired with an honeſt Indignation at thoſe, whoſe chief Amuſement is to inveigh againſt her Sex: And to found general Aſperſions, upon the Miſconduct of an Individual, even tho' it may evidently appear to be accidental, or involuntary, boldly ſtands forth the Champion of the Fair.

THIS Rancour, too common among Men, hath various Cauſes. In ſome it is meerly a Malignity of Diſpoſition,

and Propenſity to calumniate: In others it is the Effect of Diſappointment; for, as a Conſciouſneſs of Unworthineſs would in Man appear miraculous; ſo Reſentment for a Repulſe is natural. Self-ſufficiency has infected this Species of Men with Ill-nature; and the old ſatyrical Codes are daily enlarged and improved, ſo that a Deſire to depreciate the fair Part of the Creation, ſeems to have become epidemical.

THE following Pages are deſigned to expoſe the Falſehood, and controvert the erroneous Proceedings of thoſe who poſſeſs the Talent of extracting Blemiſhes from Beauties, and conſtitutional Imbecilities into Crimes; by drawing Pourtraits from the Scale of Truth, and ſhewing each Sex in its proper Light; and, I hope, the Contraſt will evidently evince, that Beings of leſs Frailties than Man ſhould pretend to cenſure female Foibles.

AN Attempt of this Nature, calculated to diſcourage the malignant Satisfaction which the Enemies of the Fair

Sex take in ranſacking ancient and modern Satyriſts, to glean Materials for ſuch unnatural Abuſe, the Candid will allow ought to meet Encouragement; for if it does not entirely anſwer the End propoſed, it may ſtimulate ſome abler Champion to enter the Field with more Effect.

In an Age like this, when female Education is ſo extremely confined, and faſhionable Trifles, and Time-killing Amuſements, are the only Objects of Study; ſome may imagine, that the Sex, in many Particulars, are too culpable to admit of a Vindication---but I hope the Peruſal of the following Lines will refute ſuch Opinion---But even if this Thought was admitted as Fact, which is not the Caſe, Impartiality ſhould be obſerved, and a Contraſt made, that the moſt ſhould not blame the leaſt guilty; and the Faultleſs alone ſhould throw the firſt Stone.

Are Men leſs guilty, or purſue they more important Objects than what Cuſtom has impoſed for the Study of Females? Some Ladies will game; but how ſuperior is

the Number of Gameſters among Men: Ladies muſt loſe in the Courſe of Gaming: But ſince their Loſſes ſeldom effect any Thing but their Pin-Money, and often produce a Reformation---the Practice of Gaming, at all Times hurtful, is leſs pernicious among Ladies than Gentlemen, who frequently game away princely Fortunes, and reduce their Families to the moſt imminent Diſtreſs.

LADIES, I have endeavoured to do my Subject proper Honor; but if my Endeavours fall ſhort of your Expectations, rather impute any Deficiencies to a Want of Abilities, than a Remiſſneſs in Inclination to ſerve You.

I remain, LADIES,

Your moſt devoted humble Servant,

MARY SEYMOUR MONTAGUE.

THE EDITOR'S Advertiſement

To the GENTLEMEN of GREAT-BRITAIN.

GENTLEMEN,

IT muſt certainly give a ſenſible Pleaſure to every Admirer of the FAIR SEX, to find there is a female Pen hardy enough to vindicate the Honor of herſelf, and her lovely Compeers, and ſufficiently agreeable to render the Refutation of every unjuſt Male Sarcaſm or Imputation pleaſing, even to the Men.

TOO long hath our Sex laſhed the Pride of Creation with every Reproach which Paſſion could invent, or Prejudice dictate; when, alas! it has too frequently happened, that the Malice of Men was the meer Effect of their own Vices, or Imprudence. The bad Huſband calls the Wife bad, if ſhe reſents the too juſt Cauſe given by him for Reſentment: Nay, he even goes ſo far as to charge her tendereſt Advice, as the irritating Cauſe of his Delinquency. The Libertine thinks all Women laſcivious, becauſe he has reduced one or two to Proſtitution---But are theſe proper Judges of the Sex? the one claims a Prerogative to aggrieve, but fluently arraigns when vexed by the Effects of ſuch Aggravation. The other, armed with Deceit,

ranges to deſtroy Simplicity and Innocence; and, when he has enſnared one, impeaches the whole Sex.

THE happy Huſband, and reſpectful Lover, are not eſteemed proper Judges; becauſe the firſt is biaſſed by a Bleſſing denied to many, and the latter has ſeen his Miſtreſs but at a Diſtance: but are they not as proper Judges as the others?---Let *thoſe* only imitate *theſe* in their Conduct and Principles; and, like *theſe*, they will thank Heaven for the ineſtimable Donation of Woman, to bleſs the Days of Man.

LET Huſbands ſupply the Ideas of the Author in thoſe Particulars, which ſhe may not have fully handled; or where ſhe may unknowingly have been remiſs---and do Juſtice to their Wives.

LET Lovers add Force to our Arguments, by cheriſhing and making known ſuch Virtues in the fair Sex, which may have eſcaped the Penetration of the Author.

LET every worthy Son uſe his Endeavours to do Honor to the Virtue of his Mother, and extend the Knowledge of ſuch Excellencies as may have been unobſerved, becauſe not general: for, certainly, if peculiar Follies or Frailties, Conſtitution only in a Few, have been ſought for with Avidity, and made known to the World; peculiar Excellencies and Virtues, not to be always met with, ſhould be equally made public; for Good-nature deſerves as conſpicuous a Place as Malice.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt Obedient,

Humble Servant,

FRA. BACON LEE.

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

LADIES OF THE COTERIE.

LADIES,

TO you I dedicate my Lays,
Whoſe Virtues dazzle, and whoſe Beauties blaze;
Whoſe decent Carriage gives ſublime Delight,
And awes the Paſſions which your Charms excite.
From your united Aid I ſhelter ſeek,
The ſtronger Females ſhould aſſiſt the Weak:
If you beſtow your Sanction on my Muſe,
The rougher Sex will bluſh their Strength to uſe.
For ſure ſuch Charms, and Wit that Charms refines,
Which brightly in your gay Aſſembly ſhines,
Muſt by Stupidity itſelf be felt,
And the moſt callous into Juſtice melt.
Freely beneath your Patronage I'll rove,
And win each Male to Truth and pureſt Love.

YE Fair, who meet each other to improve,
And vulgar Codes of Prejudice remove;
Regard not when the ſilly Coxcomb ſparrs,
Smile at Fools Bolts, or Critics maſſy Barrs;
They urge your Secrets, Malice needs muſt own,
Are ſurely bad becauſe to them unknown;
So by theſe Elves *Free Maſons* are decry'd,
Becauſe to them their *Secrets* are deny'd:
Ev'n when they love, the fair Sex they decry,
And think it Taſte to give their Soul the Lye;
Mechanically dwell on fancy'd Faults,
While female Charms engage their buſy Thoughts.
Down Satire, down, repent upon thy Knees,
Retract thy Malice to procure thine Eaſe;
Teach thy hard Heart ſoft Sentiments to feel,
And at the Shrine of fair MINERVA kneel.
If ſhe forgives not when you ſuppliant ſue,
Perpetual Pain will to your Crime be due.
But if, to gain Remiſſion, you ſucceed,
The Fair will ſmile, and you'll be bleſt indeed.

I am, LADIES, &c.

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ON

WOMAN.

EPISTLE I.

NO longer, Charlotte, at thy Toilet ſit,
But Charms exterior for the mental quit;
Detach thy Thoughts from Dreſs for ſome ſmall Time,
With me to taſte of Pleaſures more ſublime:
Let us ſurvey together Womankind,
And trace the Beauties of the Female Mind;

Explain why Men againſt our Sex declaim,
Deny the Truth, and meanly filch our Fame:
Explore the Thoughts, the ſelfiſh Views expoſe
Of ſuch who glory to be deem'd our Foes:
Unveil Deceit, ſhoot Malice as it flies,
Correct Defamers, and explode their Lies:
Evince to Man that our imputed Pride
Is prudent Care to Decency ally'd:
Elucidate whatever may perplex,
But vindicate the Honour of the Sex.

CONCERNING WOMAN, Women reaſon beſt,
By MAN, Opinion is in Malice dreſt;
Their Prejudices make our Faults appear
Of larger Magnitude than what they are;
While with precautious Rancour they deny
The Charms apparent to Good-nature's Eye:
For ſome Examples of bad Women known,
Muſt all the Sex endure the Stigmas thrown?
Say, muſt each ſpotleſs Maid, devoid of Blame,
Adopt the guilty Individual's Shame?
Will ſprinkling me compoſe a Siſter's Duſt?
Muſt I be poliſh'd for my Neighbour's Ruſt?

LORDS OF CREATION, take a Woman's Word,
All GEN'RAL CENSURES are of Courſe abſurd;
In Search of Faults Ill-nature prowls about,
The wiſe and good ſeek only Beauties out,
Which found, give greater Pleaſure to their Mind,
Than to the waſpiſh all the Faults they find.

YE Fair, perhaps ye would the Reaſon trace,
Why ye muſt bend to Man's imperial Race!
Why Lordly Males are authoriz'd to rule,
And Female Wit ſometimes obeys a Fool.
No ſerious Anſwer ſuch a Queſtion needs,
Tis built on Error, and the Truth exceeds:
Man begg'd the Queſtion, Woman gave Aſſent,
And Man ſat down with fancy'd Pow'r content;
But the moſt ſtubborn of theſe Monarchs prove
The moſt ſubmiſſive when they fall in Love:
Peculiar Charms ſome Heroes Hearts obtain,
And ſome through Whim enliſt in Cupid's Train;
Some fall the Victims of a Female Wit,
To Beauty all implicitly ſubmit;
For when on Man the Rays of Beauty ſhine,
That Moment Male Prerogatives decline.

'Tis laughable theſe Lordlings to explore,
As meanly whining as they bragg'd before.
What Subterfuge can from Deriſion ſave
The fancied Monarch, but the real Slave!

In moſt Male Syſtems Women are bely'd,
Blam'd undeſerving, and condemn'd untry'd;
It then remains for us to plead our Cauſe,
And crave a Verdict under Reaſon's Laws.

Respecting Woman, what may Wrong appear,
Examin'd rightly, may from Blame be clear;
Some ſeeming Follies brought to Reaſon's Teſt,
Are real Virtues in the Female Breaſt;
Eſſential Virtues in each Sex the ſame,
Point out the Paths that lead to moral Fame;
But Virtues of the ſecondary Kind,
Are not the ſame in Male as Female Mind;
For what in Woman Delicacy ſeems,
In Man the World Effeminacy deems;
To judge of Truth in each conteſted Act,
Firſt know the Perſon, then ſurvey the Fact,

THE All-ſupreme, in fair Creation's Plan,
In forming Woman made a ſofter Man;
More delicate in Body and in Mind,
More tender, ſentimental, and refin'd:
While ev'ry Virtue dwells within her Breaſt,
She ſhines a Woman, and as ſuch is bleſt;
But when ſhe ſpurns at Decency's Controul,
She changes Sex, and is a Man in Soul.

HEAV'N from our Sex conceals the Book of Fate,
Or few wou'd venture on the Marriage State:
If we but knew that it was pre-ordain'd,
Thoſe ſhould turn Tyrants who Submiſſion feign'd,
What Woman fooliſhly wou'd wiſh to prove
An Age of Sorrows for a Day of Love?
Wou'd a fair mortal Daughter of the Skies,
Ten thouſand Glories beaming in her Eyes,
Admit her kneeling Lover's artful Suit,
Cou'd ſhe divine he'd ſink into a Brute?
Oh! Blindneſs to the future kindly giv'n,
That Man in us might gain an earthly Heav'n;

And ſometimes, for Examples to us all,
Bring Prudes to Sin, and work a Coquet's Fall;
A ſingle Woman into Ruin hurl'd,
May warn a thouſand in the female World.
Hope humbly then, with cautious Prudence wed,
And join in nuptial Bands with pious Dread;
Perhaps an Act of Merit you'll perform,
Reclaim a Fudler, or a Rake reform;
But if your Spouſe incorrigible ſeems,
You'll prove your Patience if you ſhun Extremes.

Lo! the poor Milk-maid whoſe unpoliſh'd Mind,
In Sylvan Scenes ſublimeſt Joys can find;
Whoſe Station ne'er permitted her to ſtray,
To where CORNELLY's changes Night to Day;
More ſolid Pleaſures to her Graſp are giv'n
A ſofter Rapture and ſerener Heav'n:
Some ſafer Extacy with Eaſe embrac'd;
Some ſmooth Enjoyment undebauch'd by Taſte;
Where artful Man cannot the Soul entrance
By melting Muſic, or the myſtic Dance;
But harmleſs Strains, and awkward Motions ſhew
Their dull Amuſement is not Virtue's Foe;

Nor need the Female fear a mental Storm,
Where the Incentive ſcarce has Pow'r to warm:
Let the more elegant attempt to find
In gilded Scenes ſuch golden Peace of Mind;
Thoughtleſs to Man's perfidious Snares they run,
Believe gay Villains---truſt---and are undone.

SOME who pretend to be immenſely wiſe,
Say, In AMBITION our chief Error lies:
The Milkmaid pants to be the Farmer's Bride,
The Farmer's Daughter in a Coach wou'd ride;
A Coach and two her Portion ſoon appears,
Then for a Coach and ſix ſhe falls in Tears.
THIS ſighs to call a Coronet her own,
And THAT aſpires to glitter on a Throne:
But what great Harm can ſuch Ambition cauſe?
It acts no Murders, it o'erturns no Laws.
While by Ambition in the manly Breaſt,
The rich are plunder'd, and the poor oppreſs'd:
View griſly Death o'er Fields of Carnage ſtride!
Hear groaning Victims to imperial Pride!
The bubbling Current ſtreams with human Gore,
The ſedgy Bank is verdant now no more;

Behold the mangled Limb beſpatter'd down,
The burning Village and the batter'd Town!
All ſink alike, the fearful and the brave;
One common Ditch receives them as a Grave:
THESE are the Glories of the lordly Males,
This the Ambition which in Man prevails;
Infected from the Peaſant to the King,
In Cruelty they take a boundleſs Swing;
Kill with Impunity, devoid of Shame,
And fancy Murder is the Road to Fame;
But in a Wiſh to ſhine, which none offends,
With us the Puniſhment the Crime attends;
For when our Pride cannot its End obtain,
'Tis ſure a Puniſhment to wiſh in vain.
Beſides, in Female Hearts the Thirſt of Dreſs
Aſſiſts the needy, and relieves Diſtreſs.
While the gay Ornament is Beauty's Toil,
The ample Payment makes the Artiſt ſmile:
By female Dreſs how many poor are fed!
In Luxury what Numbers find their Bread!
Then ſure Ambition in the Female Mind,
Was not a Folly, but a Charm deſign'd;

Throughout the Sex the Paſſion we deſcry
Gleam in the low, and glitter in the high;
In variegated top-knots here diſplay'd,
And there refulgent in the Gems Parade.

Ask, For whoſe Uſe the golden Tiſſues ſhine?
For whom the Pencil works the grand Deſign?
For whom Brocades are deck'd with lively Flow'rs?
With Truth and Reaſon we reply, For ours.
For us the Weaver bids the Shuttle fly,
Varies the Tints, and forms a ſilken Sky:
For us the Artiſt bids the Di'mond blaze,
And dazzle with Variety of Rays:
For us the Merchant tempts the raging Main,
To decorate us for his private Gain.
Though foppiſh Males, who yet our Sex deſpiſe,
With us diſpute each manufactur'd Prize;
With awkward Delicacy imitate,
And copy thoſe whom they affect to hate;
Contempt alone ſuch dreſſy Fribbles ſuits,
For Fops are more deſpiſeable than Brutes.

It had been better, ſay our lordly Elves,
If we were more conſiſtent with ourſelves:
Form'd with leſs Whims, and leſs Deſire to change,
Leſs prone through Regions of Conceits to range.
We anſwer thoſe, who in this Manner ſpeak,
Miſtaken Notions will miſlead the weak;
For Pope himſelf, our great ſatyric Foe,
Says, "To our Changes half our Charms we owe:"
It wou'd be found that one eternal Spring
Wou'd ſatiate through the Sameneſs of the Thing:
Beſides, our haughty Monitors we ſee,
Fond of Variety as well as we.
They therefore may the Crime of Falſehood ſhun,
By having full Variety in one.
Nor let them blame us if we vary Charms,
To pleaſe and keep them conſtant to our Arms.

Grieve not, ye Fair, to want the Strength of Man;
You're more ſecure on Delicacy's Plan:
For when the Brute prevails, and makes him ſtorm,
Then ſweetly ſmile him to a placid Form;

Recal his Reaſon, damp the raging Fire,
And let your Voice be great Timotheus' Lyre.
Male Storms ſubſide before a female Sigh,
And Anger leſſens on a ſoft Reply:
Let Man, through Dangers, Provinces ſubdue,
He conquers others to ſubmit to you:
Before the Shaft of Love Ambition flies,
And glittering Swords give Way to ſparkling Eyes.

THE real Happineſs of Womankind
Depends upon the Culture of the Mind:
Improper Education will deſtroy
What elſe wou'd delegate ſublimeſt Joy:
Then let no Wiſh in female Minds prevail,
To learn thoſe Things which only fit the Male;
For ſhe denies her Sex who idly prates
Of hunting Matches, and of leaping Gates;
Who hails the Huntſman, or the Beagles chears,
And in the Habit of a Man appears:
Such manly Females, DELICACY ſhuns,
And from ſuch Amazon-Virago's runs,

The tender ſimp'ring Male, and bluſt'ring Fair,
From either Sex the ſame Deriſion ſhare.
Far as Creation's ample Bounds appear,
Each Female's fitted to her proper Sphere.
The Country Damſel for the Farmer's Wife;
The courtly Dame to ſhine in higher Life;
The City Virgin for Life's buſy Scenes,
And blooming Maids, to bleſs Mankind, as Queens.
But if they wiſh in other Orbs to move
Than what kind Nature's fair Intents approve;
Then let them blame, if Exigencies vex,
Their own Miſconduct, not arraign the Sex.
For, when the ſylvan Nymph at Court would ſhine,
She grows affected, aiming to refine:
No leſs the courtly Belle, who ruſticates,
Retains her Manners, though ſhe changes States;
And flighty Innocence appears a Vice,
To thoſe whom Want of Converſe renders nice.
Then let each Maid ſteer round her proper Coaſt;
She'll riſe a courtly, or a village Toaſt.

'Tis laudable in Parts that fit us well
To burn with Emulation to excel:
But when we aim at what we cannot be,
At what ſuits not our Talents or Degree;
'Tis then alone our Pride produces Pain,
'Tis then alone Ambition is a Stain.
Oh! may once more the happy Age be ſeen,
When Maids contented fill their deſtin'd Scene;
When no Ambition in the female Breaſt,
Pants and deprives a Beauty of her Reſt;
But mildly joyful, and ſerenely calm,
On Life Contentment pours a pleaſing Balm.
What if the Farmer's Wife, to ſhew her Taſte,
Should all her Time with prating Parrots waſte;
Neglect her Poultry, and her Dairy's Care,
To hear the feather'd Mimicks ſing and ſwear;
Or ſhou'd her Joys upon a Monkey fix,
Admire his Grin, and doat upon his Tricks;
Would not ſuch Fooleries as much ſurprize,
As if you ſaw a Ducheſs making Pies;

Or ſome fine Counteſs in the Laundry's Floods,
Involv'd in Steam, and ſpatter'd o'er with Suds?
Sooner ſhall Conquerors their Fame forego,
Or trembling Cowards bravely ſtrike a Blow;
Sooner the Sons of Neptune grow polite,
Or Lawyers truly ſwear that *white* is *white*;
Sooner a whining Lover be ſincere,
Than Woman ſhine in an improper Sphere.
Nature beſtows on all, in each Degree,
The very Station where they ought to be.
How fooliſh they, who at their Fate repine,
And wiſh to paſs Diſcretion's bounded Line;
Pant to expatiate in a World unknown,
And quit the temp'rate for the torrid Zone;
The homely Field of certain Bliſs refuſe,
And, for a Shadow, ſolid Pleaſure loſe!
One Wiſh obtain'd, another Joy appears,
To raiſe new Wiſhes, and excite our Tears.
This conquer'd, palls upon the ſickly Taſte,
Then to another for Relief we haſte;

From Bliſs to Bliſs by boundleſs Wiſhes toſt,
Till all our Peace is in our Folly loſt.
Learn then to be content, nor wiſh to range,
And not your State, but Mode of thinking change.
An eaſy, ductile, unambitious Mind,
Is every Bleſſing, in yourſelf confin'd.
Thus when our Foes enumerate our Faults,
Arraign our Actions, and condemn our Thoughts;
Founding their Reaſons not on Truth, but Spite,
Prove themſelves wrong,---and WOMEN in the RIGHT.

END of the FIRST EPISTLE.

AN

AN ORIGINAL

ESSAY

ON

WOMAN.

EPISTLE II.

A STRING of Faults, according to our Plan,
Muſt next appear, as blazon'd out by Man:
Man, who invents when only Virtue ſhines,
And often Virtue into Vice refines,
Imputes to us, to blaſt unſully'd Fame,
Errors peculiar to his own dear Frame;

Or unexiſting Caprices provides,
Sooner than quit the Theme, when Malice guides.

DETRACTION, ſtill with Man a fav'rite Theme,
Gives Accuſation a delicious Dream:
Thus their Opinion lordly Males declare,
And thus indict the inoffenſive Fair;
"Ladies, ſtand forth---to your Indictment plead,
"Nor by Detraction, longer Envy feed:
"What Friend is ſafe from your malicious Sneers?
"Witneſs your Feuds, your Jealouſies, and Tears.
"Can ye ſee Virtues greater than your own,
"And not attempt thoſe Virtues to dethrone?
"Can ye behold a Friend, without a Frown
"To fortune riſe, nor aim to pull her down?
"Can ye view Beauties, which ſuperior blaze,
"Nor wiſh the Pow'r to blaſt them while ye gaze?
"If ſome have Merits, manifeſtly ſeen,
"It racks your Soul, and gives your Breaſt the Spleen:
"Then for ſome Fault ye diligently ſeek,
"To kill the Merit or to make it weak."

HOLD, wond'rous Sage, nor more thy Wit diſplay,
Nor in Aſſertions throw thy Time away:
Let the vain Efforts of thy Malice cool,
Nor take Exceptions for a general Rule.
Indeed, an Individual may be found,
Whoſe Candour is in ranc'rous Malice drown'd,
Who, dark herſelf in univerſal Night,
Wou'd fain involve her Neighbour's radiant Light.
Such ſhunn'd by all, a meer Example ſeems
To caution Beauty from detractive Themes.
But with good Humour's Eye the Sex ſurvey,
You'll find that Candour bears the greateſt Sway.
While Man to Malice gives unbounded ſwing,
Belies each Neighbour, or decries his King.
Nay, ſometimes by a ſtronger Phrenzy driv'n,
Tho' impotent, aſſails the Heights of Heav'n.

CONCERNING Scandal what a Rout they make,
We ſcandalize for Scandalizing' Sake:
Propoſe no End, yet labour to undo,
And make each Fallacy appear as true.

With Volubility a Siſter blame;
Slow to applaud, but fluent to defame:
Immers'd in Self-ſufficiency, believe
Ourſelves the faireſt Progeny of Eve:
Poſſeſt of greater Merit than the reſt,
Immenſely charming, and profuſely bleſt;
Then kindly give the contrary Extremes
To thoſe, who dare ſhine forth with rival Beams:
And, fir'd by ſcandal-raiſing Steams, beſtow
Names on all Faults, and Faults on all we know.

THIS is a Picture of our Paſſion's Strife,
Which Man pretends, is drawn from real Life:
Here Scandal, born of *Envy*, is pourtray'd,
In Feature ſtrong, as if by Man diſplay'd.
But ſhould we find malignant Humours guide
Thoſe wilful pencils, which are dipp'd in Pride;
What Piece can we expect they ſhould produce,
But ſuch as to malicious Ends conduce!
Truth would be baniſh'd, or diſtorted ſhown,
Exaggeration make the Piece its own;

While not a ſingle Tint would ſtrike the Eye
To give a Sanction to the bulky Lie.
Thoſe who frequent (we challenge to declare)
The ſocial Circles of the friendly Fair;
If on ſuch Faults with Truth they can enlarge,
Or find ſufficient to ſupport the Charge;
Alas! the Picture is by Fancy wrought,
And all the Canvas fill'd by partial Thought;
Adorn'd by Malice, ſhaded o'er with Lies,
Deck'd in Deceits, and finiſh'd in Diſguiſe.

But, ſee fair Truth impartial Tints beſtows,
And radiant Candour on the Canvas glows:
Soft ey'd Humanity appears in Sight,
With Emanations of ethereal Light.
With Tenderneſs behold ſoft Boſoms heave,
Sigh at each Woe, and pant but to relieve:
See mortal Miſeries the Tear ſupply,
And humid Virtue fills the ſparkling Eye;
While in the Cheeks the trembling Roſes play,
Intenſely glow or let the Lily ſway,

Like Sunbeams through a clear, tranſparent Screen
The lovely Soul is through the Body ſeen;
Each noble Sentiment diſtinctly ſpeaks,
Wets the bright Eye, or crimſons o'er the Cheeks:
While Man, with callous Heart and vacant Eye,
Beholds Diſtreſs without a ſingle Sigh;
Thinks Want of Feeling is a manly Sign,
And Souls inflexible appear divine;
Indeed ſometimes a Feeling he'll confeſs,
Pretend it great, and wail o'er each Diſtreſs;
While his unheaving Breaſt, and tearleſs Eye,
But prove, his Nature gives his Words the Lie:
His fruitleſs Labour, to compel a Tear,
Makes his mock Tenderneſs a Farce appear.
COQUETRY next, with Fickleneſs they join,
And rack their Brains, ſome Invectives to coin,
With, *Prone to Change*, and *Fleeting as the Air*,
They ſtigmatize all Claſſes of the Fair;
Ring all the hackney'd Changes on the Moon,
And witty Chimes to Weathercocks attune;

Ranſack old Times for ev'ry Dart of Spleen,
And ev'ry modern Witticiſm glean:
But let us try the Cauſe in open Day,
And give, impartially, each Party Play.

You firſt attack a ſimple Virgin's Heart,
Whine out ſoft Lies, and ſeek her weakeſt Part;
With diſengenuous Fallacies aſſail,
And hope to find, or hope to make her frail.
At firſt afraid, ſhe dreads your gloting Eyes,
Like forky Lightnings flaſhing through the Skies;
Dreads all your Sighs, and your moſt placid Forms,
Like foaming Billows, or like furious Storms.
You perſevere---She thinks it real Pain,
And pities, while you artfully complain.
You gain her Faith---and teach her Tears to flow,
Then ſtab her Heart, and ſink her into Woe.
She ſees your Vileneſs, and her helpleſs Fate,
And mourns her Want of Caution, when too late.
Time heals the Anguiſh, and allays the Smart,
And though an hopeleſs, leaves a vacant Heart.

The vacant Heart which hath been taught to burn,
Wiſhes to feel ſoft Sentiments return.
Another Lover comes---the Maid believes,
And like the former this with Wiles deceives.
Thus taught by Artifice, ſhe artful grows,
And warn'd by Want of Caution, Caution ſhows.
Then blame us not for Arts yourſelves have taught,
Our Battles are beneath your Banners fought.
You uſe your Skill, in order to deſtroy;
And we our Skill, but in Defence, employ.

You term us the moſt fickle Things on Earth;
But your Demerits give our Changes Birth.
You ſhow good Morals, Conſtancy, and Parts,
And we'll take Care to ſhow unchanging Hearts;
But if on ſerious Trial we ſhould find
A winning Form, contain a Villain's Mind;
Can any blame us, if we Ruin ſhun,
And timely wiſe, from ſure Deſtruction run?
Oh! wou'd each ſimple Maid Inſtruction take,
Nor try to ſlumber, when ſhe's wide awake!

Your univerſal Character ſhe knows,
Then why on one her Confidence repoſe!
Before the ſtricteſt Scrutiny hath taught,
That he's unlike his wily Sex in Thought.
Men prone to Villainy, ſo well ſucceed,
That one juſt Man's a Miracle indeed.
Then carefully, ye Fair, the Ruin ſhun,
Suſpecting ALL, to be deceiv'd by NONE.

As round the Circle of our Faults you beat,
You ſtrongly charge us with refin'd DECEIT;
Thruſt to the utmoſt Depth the rankling Spear,
And make it conſtitutional appear.
That Nature, with the Promptneſs to offend,
Gave us the Art our Follies to defend;
Sophiſtic Eloquence, and wily Tears,
To dupe the Reaſon of the Man who hears.
Vain Falſehood all--- by Truth with Eaſe remov'd,
And by Experience ev'ry Day diſprov'd.
For think, weak REAS'NER, when our Hearts firſt beat,
If Mother Nature fill'd them with Deceit:

We, ſure, to uſe it ſhould moſt fiercely preſs,
When Blood was warmeſt, and our Terrors leſs:
But ſearch Society, all Claſſes ſcan,
Then ſay, what Virgin e'er ſeduced a Man;
Or ſay, if Codes of Art ſhe e'er receiv'd,
Till vilely once, or more than once, deceiv'd.
Conſcience informs you it is ſtrictly true,
We ne'er are artful till firſt taught by you:
The Contraſt ſee---the hopeful Youth behold,
Who ſcarcely hath his ſixteen Summers told;
Already finds his growing Conſcience ſear'd,
And ſwears a Falſehood e'er he has a Beard.
The eaſy Maid in his firſt Eſſay's bit,
He tells his Comrades—they applaud his Wit.
His next Intrigue a Villainy appears,
His Crime increaſes ſwiftly with his Years;
Upon a beauteous Wife he makes Attack,
But ſteady Virtue keeps the Spoiler back:
Force ſtands his Friend whene'er Intreaties fail,
He turns out Brute in order to prevail.
The injur'd Huſband with Reſentment glows,
Our *Blood* adds Crime to Crime, and onward goes:

Steel now decides what Juſtice ought to weigh,
And wiſeſt Laws depend upon a Fray.
Falſe, fatal Honor! what do you beſtow?
Pow'r to the injur'd, to encreaſe his Woe;
And, to the Villain, give a fatal Chance,
To win more Crimes, and greater Guilt enhance:
The Guiltleſs falls---the Guilty takes his Way,
Again the cruel Tragedy to play.
He's term'd a Villain by each virtuous Voice;
Had ever Man ſuch Reaſon to rejoice;
The Huſband ſlain, the Wife in deep Deſpair,
Had ever Man ſo little Cauſe to care?

OF *Obſtinacy* ſome our Sex arraign,
And ſay our Pleaſure is to give them Pain.
Cauſeleſs offended---without Reaſon pleas'd,
Infallibly perverſe whene'er diſeaſed;
For ſuch have a Diſorder in their Mind;
Whom Trifles diſcompoſe, or render kind.

THIS Accuſation, like each other Caſe,
Is a weak Building on a ſandy Baſe:

For Women's Souls too flexible are made
Of ſtubborn Qualities to make Parade:
While Matters (among Men) of ſmalleſt Weight,
Will often cauſe a national Debate:
Then what in us is Obſtinacy deem'd,
With them, as Reſolution is eſteem'd;
For erringly, if Man at firſt ſhould go,
Through Reſolution he continues ſo:
In vain Conviction glitters in his Sight,
He ſhuts his Eyes againſt the radiant Light.

Revenge is oft' an Accuſation made
Againſt the injur'd Wife, and ſlighted Maid;
As if our Injuries we could not feel,
Or Nature ſhould her gen'ral Laws repeal:
'Tis true, that when an Injury is giv'n,
The Puniſhment is only due to Heav'n;
But who, when Rage excites, or paſſions riſe,
Can at all Times remain ſerenely wiſe,
Still the ſwol'n Breaſt, and curb the head-ſtrong Will,
Or bind the Hands, whene'er the Heart thinks ill?

But ev'n in this, proud Man with all his Wit
Muſt to our greater Tenderneſs ſubmit:
For when Revenge his callous Heart incite;
In crimſon Streams, and Carnage, he delights.
Ten thouſand Bodies breathleſs on a Plain,
Invite to wiſh ten thouſand more were ſlain.
Another added Heap no Pity draws,
He ſtill purſues the deſolating Cauſe.
For Trifles, Rage his lordly Heart beſlaves,
A living Stream the purpled Paſture laves.
Frequent Examples through all Ages ſtrike,
And prove the Sex are really all alike.
While our ſoft Sex but few Examples own,
To make ſuch dread Effects of Paſſion known:
Or known by Chance, while keen Reſentment burns,
And the fair Fury at Compaſſion ſpurns:
She gratifies her Rage---Reſentment flies,
And new-born Pity dims her lovely Eyes;
She mourns her fatal Haſte---repents her Rage,
And to recal the paſt, would give an Age;
While Man is proud of having been ſo mad,
And thinks it glory to be greatly bad.

OUR CONTRADICTION does their Anger move;
We only contradict them to improve;
Deny'd the Aid of Knowledge from the Schools,
Our ſocial Queſtions are preceptive Rules;
But Paſſion ſwels them, if by Chance they find
A Female with a philoſophic Mind.
The Name of Contradiction they inflict
On thoſe fair Arguments which ſhould convict;
Then which muſt contradictory appear,
Who give the Reaſon, or the Reaſon fear?

MAN, in Creation's Scheme, to ſhow his Art,
Gives groſſeſt Paſſions to the pureſt Part;
Aſſerts when Love has touch'd a female Breaſt,
'Tis ſtronger far than when it kills his Reſt:
That to Enjoyment they more fiercely move,
And more intenſely feel the Heat of Love.
The Diff'rence, Men too eaſily miſtake,
Which the ſublime, and ſenſual Paſſions make;
His Love is founded on the groſſeſt Fires,
And gratify'd as quick as Thought expires.

Ours is ethereal, and like Lightning moves,
Yet grows with Motion, and with time improves;
Refines each Day, ſublimes with rolling Years,
Till like a Seraph's Paſſion it appears,
Free'd from all Droſs, without the leaſt Alloy,
Clear as the Light, and pure as Angel's Joy.

SAY Man's Aſſertions were from Falſehood free,
The Argument wou'd in our Favour be:
For if than his, our Inclinations ſeem
To have more Light, and give a ſtronger Beam;
If we the burſting Rays with Virtue ſhrowd,
And hide behind a ſelf-denying Cloud:
Above proud Man's our Virtue muſt aſpire,
Who acts more Crimes, though urg'd by leſs Deſire;
Who with half-animated Paſſions roves,
And if he loves not, yet pretends he loves.
Many poor Maids have felt a Life of Cares,
To Ruin drawn by Man's perfidious Snares;
But ſhew me one, who when no Snare was laid,
Through Inclination Decency betray'd:

Such like a blazing Star muſt needs appear,
Seduc'd, to warn or teach ſome Cuſtom Fear:
But among Males, the blazing Star would be
A *Modeſt Man*, whom none could think to ſee.

To be Jocoſe, our very Tongues diſpleaſe,
Where Elegance appears enthron'd on Eaſe;
Form'd with ſoft Accents Reaſon to enforce,
And mollify the Paſſions in their Courſe:
But not the leaſt Advantage to beſtow
On our imperial, vain-conceited Foe:
Leſt he ſhou'd think me talkative and rude,
I'll try to pleaſe him once; and here conclude.

END of the SECOND EPISTLE.

AN

AN ORIGINAL

ESSAY

ON

WOMAN.

EPISTLE III.

TO court MINERVA to the longing Arms,
Extend the Thought, and ſpread the mental Charms;
To lure fair Truth, in radiant Garb array'd,
And win Simplicity, that rural Maid;
To bid Senſation take the ſocial Part,
Refine Benevolence, and purge the Heart;

Expand each Foliage of the ſearching Mind,
Which free by Birth, dull Cuſtom has confin'd.
To chace fair Science in the Fields of Light,
And win from Prejudice each ſtolen right:
Such Arts as theſe ſhou'd female Breaſts inflame,
Theſe, my *fair Siſters*, are the Paths to Fame.

WHEN female Souls, embelliſh'd by each Art,
Like poliſh'd Gems, their brilliant Thoughts *impart:*
Then lordly Man amaz'd! begins to find,
We were for Something more than Slaves deſign'd;
Glotes at the charming Speaker with Surprize,
And thinks his Ears are tutor'd by his Eyes;
Till ſtrong Conviction, in a Blaze of Wit,
Compels him, lov'd Prerogative to quit.
He mourns, while with Reluctance brought to own,
That Learning's Beams ſhine not on him alone:
His ſordid Soul no gen'rous Thought employs;
He envies us our cultivated Joys.

BUT, why ſhou'd Man behold with ſcornful Eyes,
Talents, which oft above his own, can riſe:

The Sky of Genius let each Sex explore,
Then judge who can the moſt ſublimely ſoar.
Did Heav'n, thus partially, our Search reſtrain,
Or Nature bid ſuch Arrogation reign?
Had Heaven concurr'd---wou'd it Succeſs have giv'n
To ſuch as roſe by Wiſdom neareſt Heav'n?

VIEW great ELIZA, *Britain*'s Pride and Boaſt,
Vers'd in each Art---her very Name an Hoſt:
Dreadful as roaring Tempeſts to her Foes;
But mild to Friends, as when kind Zephyr blows.
Heav'n view'd the firm Contexture of her Heart,
And try'd her Virtue in each peccant Part:
Tho' unexpected, ev'ry Trial came,
Her Virtue triumph'd, and ſecur'd her Fame.
France ſtill allows the Terrors of her Reign,
And ſtill ſhe triumphs o'er the Heart of *Spain*;
And while ſhe ſits with endleſs Glory crown'd,
On Earth ſhe ſhines for Arts and Arms renown'd.
Read CATHARINA's Name in Fame's fair Page,
Sun of the North---and Glory of the Age;

As much belov'd where'er we *Ruſſians* trace,
As great ELIZA by our *Albion* Race.
Congenial Souls! urg'd by an equal Flame,
And born alike to never-dying Fame.
While other Potentates for Trifles ſtorm,
She fights to bleſs, and conquers to reform.
An awful Form! yet Love-inſpiring Mien,
A ſteady Soul---intrepid---yet ſerene.
No Guſt of Paſſion veers her ſettled Mind,
Untouch'd by Chance, to Providence reſign'd.
Like *Pallas*, ſhe with martial Ardor burns;
Yet draws the Sword that at Injuſtice ſpurns:
But, like *Minerva*, yields to Wiſdom's Laws,
Reflects on Truth, to vindicate her Cauſe.
Her Courage to her People ſeems divine,
They catch her Flame, and then as Heroes ſhine.
While others her Sagacity admire,
And by Purſuit to Wiſdom's Heights aſpire.
The froſty Ignorance of Cuſtom's Laws,
Her puiſſant animating Genius thaws.
For public Good, ſhe quits her private Eaſe;
Sees whom ſhe can---refining whom ſhe ſees.

'Tis plain that Heav'n, impartial to each Sex,
Wou'd not, confining one to Arts, perplex:
Then ſay, if Nature ſuch Reſtriction gave,
To Ignorance, to render *Woman* Slave!

NATURE hath all the Faculties beſtow'd,
Which aid proud Man to carry Learning's Load:
If juſtly weigh'd, our Judgment will be found
As clear, as ſtrong, as able and profound.
Full long as theirs our Mem'ries will retain.
Our Penetration is as quick again.
For Man himſelf allows, with all his Pride,
Our ready Wit in Exigencies try'd.
For Elocution we're by Nature made,
Form'd to excite Attention---and perſuade.
Conceited Man! pedantically vain!
Learn'd but to tire, and ſtudious but to Pain:
Deeply laborious, only to perplex,
With all the bungling Wiſdom of thy Sex.
Say, can thy long Harangues preciſely ſpun,
Which not on Paſſions, but on Periods run,

Be ever ſo emphatically hung,
As Nature's Pleadings on a female Tongue.
Man's technic Terms may make each Blockhead ſtare;
But the beſt Orators are ſure the Fair.
Woman, proſcrib'd by Uſurpation's Rules,
Deny'd the Benefit of public Schools:
By Cuſtom led through Diſſipation's Way,
To trifling Studies, or unmeaning Play:
From ſoaring Sciences unkindly ſtay'd,
And diſallow'd each ſyſtematic Aid:
Beneath ſuch glaring Diſadvantage finds,
The Road to Learning, and her Soul unbinds.
See *France* beneath her *ſalique* Law diſplay,
A DACIERE's Glory in the Blaze of Day.
No *ſalique* Law the free-born Mind controuls
Which mounts the Æther, or pervades the Poles;
It only can proſcribe the Modes of Pow'r,
But gives a greater in the very Hour.

TO Thee, lov'd DACIERE, ev'ry Muſe bow'd down,
Apollo wonder'd, and beſtow'd his Crown.

Thou took'ſt thy Way on Pegaſean Wings,
To ſip the ſweeteſt Heliconian Springs.
Urania gave to thy exploring Eye
Her deepeſt Cave, where choiceſt Treaſures lie,
The inexhauſtleſs Philoſophic Store,
The Shades of *Pindus*, and the Claſſic Lore;
Nor do the Muſes dwell in *France* alone,
An equal Share of female Fame we own;
For ſure the copious Goods they can beſtow,
They amply gave to MONTAGUE and ROWE.

IN MONTAGUE, with Knowledge moſt profound,
Keen Wit ſhines forth and Fancy's Beams abound.
All may, from her ſpontaneous-flow, receive
What ſcanty Males cannot with Study give:
Praiſe would be due to ſuch perſuading Senſe,
Tho' unimbelliſh'd by ſuch Eloquence.
Fame might to ſuch ſweet Eloquence accrue,
If Senſe profound it's ſtronger Force withdrew.
Of all his Rivals ſhe alone could cope
With our arch Enemy, ſatyric POPE.

POPE, who with dang'rous Harmony conveys
The ſharpeſt Malice in the ſweeteſt Lays.
When Diſſolution's dread Approach appears,
And all within is Anarchy and Fears;
The ſympathic ROWE, with ſofteſt Breath,
Serenely charms us to the Shades of Death;
Lulls ev'ry Doubt, expels deſponding Dread;
Blunts the fell Dart, and ſmooths the ſickly Bed:
So gently ſweet the Terror-ſtilling Lay,
We think an Angel hands us on the Way.
LENOX with bright Imagination glows,
And feeling Sentiment exalts her Proſe:
Deſcription's Field! for moral Uſe deſign'd,
Diverts at once, and edifies the Mind.

BUT how, MACAULEY! ſhall I ſpeak thy Praiſe,
The Theme to equal, how exalt my Lays!
What Diction can thy juſt Applauſe convey!
Thy Merit, what energic Thought diſplay!
Language and Thought like thine alone muſt ſhow
The countleſs Thanks we to thy Talents owe:

Sublime Ideas in a beauteous Dreſs,
Which Angels might conceive, and Saints expreſs.
Majeſtic Pomp in ev'ry Line appears,
Expreſſive Softneſs ev'ry Scruple clears:
Magnificence enchanting Plainneſs joins,
Loads not, but gilds; expels not, but refines.
Proſe rich as Poetry, the Boſom warms,
Reaſon convinces, and Deſcription charms.
Summons your male Hiſtorians, lordly Man,
Then ſearch the Group, and match her if you can.
The Search were vain, her Equal is not known,
And future Writers ſhall the Pattern own.
In the delightful CARTER we explore
A *Britiſh* DACIERE, vers'd in Claſſic Lore.
Not like proud Man, who, of his Learning vain,
Reads but to ſteal, and doubts but to explain;
Purloins a Thought to fill a paltry Rhyme;
Admires---and robs the Ancient all the Time:
While ſhe in reading ev'ry Doubt removes;
And when ſhe deigns to imitate, improves.
With all the Majeſty of ancient Times,
She tunes her Couplets, and exalts her Rhymes:

But never baſely robs another's Store,
To make her own, by pilfer'd Riches, more.
Replete with Genius, can ſhe have a Cauſe
To feel the Laſh of plagiary Laws?
But if ſometimes by Laſſitude beguil'd,
She, for her own, adopts another's Child;
She ſo reſpectfully her Prize conveys,
And in a far ſuperior Dreſs diſplays,
The Parent of his Offspring, thus bereft,
Would ſmile, and thank her for the lucky Theft:
As great as his confeſs her After-Fame,
And own the Plaudits of an equal Claim.

ATTEND ſoft WHATELY's ſympathetic Flow,
The tender Plainings of melodious Woe:
The mournful Cadence, the harmonious Tear,
The heart-felt Lines that render Reading dear.
When now the Gleams of Joy break through the Gloom,
Exalt the Soul, and ev'ry Thought illume.
The tender Spirit, ſeeking quick Relief,
Rejects its Bane, and tramples o'er its Grief;

But ſoon, alas! reſumes the plaintive Strain,
And falls to wonted Tenderneſs again.
The Burſt of Joy but momentary ſeems,
Like quick-fled Lightnings, or like ſick Mens Dreams.
The tender Reader taſtes each melting Part,
And feels a Sentence as he feels a Dart;
Pleas'd of his Woes to find ſo juſt a Tale,
But griev'd to think he has ſuch Woes to wail:
While the Unfeeling, from ſuch Griefs exempt,
Sinks into Sympathy, and Self-Contempt:
Wiſhes for ſoft Senſations, tender Cares,
And gains his Wiſh the Moment he deſpairs.
WHATELY, of Praiſe thy Genius claims a Part,
But ev'ry Plaudit muſt await thy Heart.

LEAPOR's ingenious Lays the Boſom warm,
Steal on the Soul, and all the Senſes charm:
While Sentiments ingeniouſly combine,
And through Self-Love bid faireſt Candour ſhine.
We in CENTLIVRE's ſprightly Efforts trace
An eaſy Elegance replete with Grace;

Simplicity appears, ennobling Art,
While Art to Nature does her Aid impart.
Life's unaffected Landſcape ſtrikes our Eyes,
Not by falſe Taſte refin'd into Diſguiſe.

To SHERIDAN, the tender Paſſions owe,
The pleaſing Thrillings of enchanting Woe.
Sorrows that ſooth, and to calm Joys invite,
Sighs that enrapture, Tears that give Delight.
The ſoft Senſations through the Boſom glide,
Ambition ſtill, and blunt the String of Pride.

GRIFFITHS hath found the Secret to unite
The Soft, the Learn'd, the Sprightly, and Polite.
Equal, like ADDISON's, the Periods run;
Nor rais'd by Bombaſt, nor depreſs'd by Pun.
Correct like POPE, each eaſy Sentence flows,
Like DRYDEN's varied, and as ſmooth as ROWE's.

THEN ſhow me, Man, among your Sons of Pride,
One who, like us, of lib'ral Aids deny'd,

Can mount the Æther, tread the Fields of Light,
And bid Inſtruction mingle with Delight.
Explore paſt Time, the Lore of Sages read,
With Claſſic Oil, the Lamp of Knowledge feed;
Diſplay the various Characters of Life,
And paint the Paſſions in their mingled Strife.
Nor, where the Genius, to aſſiſt her, draws
The kind Alliance of mechanic Laws;
Muſt Woman to her lordly Rival yield,
But claims due Honour in the manual Field.

BEHOLD, in varied Forms, and varied Dyes,
The fair Creation of the *Fair* ariſe:
What treads the velvet Plain, or leaps the Mound,
Or in prone Poſture curls along the Ground;
What mounts the Air, or ſkims the liquid Flood,
Stirs the ſoft Mould, or prowls the lonely Wood,
Appear depicted in the Forms of Life,
And to the Judgment give a pleaſing Strife.

BEHOLD the craggy Rock, the ſhelly Strand;
The moſs-grown Cave, and Grotto wildly plann'd;

Where Art romantic borrows Nature's Dreſs,
And dreary Scenes upon the Fancy preſs.

Behold the blooming Beauties of the Spring;
The Mountains ſmile, the feſtive Vallies ſing;
The waving Corn to Zephyr ſeems to yield,
And fix'd Amazement views a moving Field.
The lowing Cattle deck another Ground,
And Fancy echoes to the diſtant Sound;
The budding Roſes ſeemingly excell
Art's Emulation, and invite to ſmell;
And luſcious Fruits, that tempting Ripeneſs waſte,
Delude Beholders to a fancy'd Taſte:
Then yield, proud Man; to Truth and Juſtice yield,
And quit with Candour the conteſted Field.
Think not to govern is alone your due;
For we can govern full as well as you.
Think not to Conqueſt you alone have Claim;
In that our Sex will ſure eclipſe your Fame,
If you to Arts and Sciences pretend,
Inſtructed equally, the Palm contend.

For Elocution, and for Ready Wit,
You'll surely not in Competition fit.
In each fine Art our Sex will bear the Sway;
Then let your Reason teach you to obey.

END of the THIRD EPISTLE.

A N ORIGINAL

E S S A Y

ON

W O M A N.

E P I S T L E IV.

O Nuptial Bliſs! our Being's End and Aim,
Congenial Rapture in a lambent Flame:
That Something, which ſtill prompts the Virgin's Sigh,
Heaves the ſoft Breaſt, or dims the brilliant Eye:
Which ſeems replete with never-dying Joys,
But known diſguſts us, and when taſted cloys:

O myſtic Rite, of Origin divine!
Without Alloy, where doſt thou deign to ſhine?
With courtly Dames, who glare in Birth-day Pride,
Strive to outvie or ſwim down Faſhion's Tide:
Or fix with City Belles, thy wiſh'd Abode,
Who labour under *India's* brighteſt Load:
Or doſt thou dwell within the humble Cot,
Where, in hard Labor, Pride is ſcarce forgot?
In no one Place thou can'ſt be always ſeen,
Yet wiſh to gild the univerſal Scene:
To any Habitation well inclin'd,
And dreading only Diſcontent of Mind:
Unbought thou always ſhun'ſt the ſordid Crew,
And pay the Mild a Viſit as their Due.
To calm the Paſſions in the Nuptial Strife,
And ſmooth the Journey thro' a Married Life,
Shall be my Theme---But hold---A female Voice
Requeſts Directions for a prudent Choice.
Fram'd for the Marriage State, ye Maids attend,
And anſwer wiſely your great Maſter's End.

LET not a *Perſon* render Prudence vain;
For faireſt Bodies fouleſt Minds contain.
But if a worthy Man, with Beauty bleſt,
Gains the Receſſes of your tender Breaſt;
Curb eve'ry Thought that ſprings from youthful Blood,
And think it but an accidental Good:
Yet let no Reaſon win you to comply
To wed a Man, where Form diſguſts your Eye,
With ſuch, Gold cannot give you ſolid Joy,
'Tis hard ſuch Prepoſſeſſion to deſtroy.
Let neither Pride nor Avarice then move
To wed the Man your Soul cannot approve:
In either Caſe, beneath the bridal Mien,
A vain or venal Proſtitute is ſeen.

THEN if a pleaſing Form and virtuous Mind
Do not exiſt, or not for you to find;
Chuſe one, and to your calmeſt Judgment truſt,
Who, tho' he charms not, gives you no Diſguſt:
For where no Reaſon for Diſguſt is found;
Good Senſe in Time may bid your Love abound:

If you with Love a Competency find,
Let not luxurious Thoughts diſtract your Mind.
Many by uſeleſs Pomp have been betray'd,
And loſt the Subſtance to embrace a Shade.

LET him have Wit, but not in harſh Replies;
Yet Wit that charms, and brightens up the Eyes:
Wit that for ever with good Humour joins,
And current Pleaſure for the Hearer coins.

LET him be learn'd --- but let him be polite;
And with Amuſement learned Codes unite.
But for the Aſs, pedantically vain,
Who carries Loads of Lumber in his Brain,
And with his Thoughts, miſplac'd, confus'd, and crude,
Is vainly booriſh, or perverſely rude:
Shun him, Oh ſhun him, as a Beaſt of Prey,
Who with hard Words wou'd worry Peace away.

LET him be wiſe, but only mildly wiſe;
Not fond to lecture and to dogmatize:

Or let him in a ſoft familiar Way
His uſeful Leſſons pleaſingly convey.
A double Profit from Inſtruction flows,
When cloſely clad in Entertainment's Cloaths.
Let your firm Choice have an experienc'd Mind;
But not Experience of a vicious Kind:
And, above all, be ſure his Morals ſcan;
For Morals only can adorn the Man.
'Tis thoſe alone that can his Actions guide
From Luſt, Diſſenſions, Avarice, and Pride.
Pride he indeed muſt have, that Pride alone
Which bids him glory Meanneſs to diſown.

SHUN the Time-ſerver, and the ſervile Slave,
The noiſy Hector, and the heartleſs Brave;
The ſimp'ring Fribble, and the tripping Beau,
The ſenſeleſs Blood with many Wounds to ſhew,
The Libertine, ſo witty and genteel,
Who has not Time his Raptures to reveal.
Indeed ſome hope a Libertine's Reform:
As Mariners eſcape a dreadful Storm.

'Tis equal Hazard --- try which e'er you pleaſe,
To tame the Rake, or quell the raging Seas.
Indeed Old Age ſometimes performs a Cure;
Try then if Patience can ſo long endure.

But, above all, avoid the callous Fool,
Who fain wou'd rule, but knows not how to rule;
Who, like a Brute, to Inſtinct gives the Rein;
Thence flows his Pleaſure, thence proceeds his Pain.
Now the fond Fit comes on without a Cauſe;
Now without Reaſon it again withdraws:
And, as bright Reaſon reigns not in his Mind,
The ſofteſt Words cannot his Actions bind.
In vain you urge him to a worthy Act;
Inſtinct muſt prompt him e'er he likes the Fact:
In vain entreat him when to Miſchief prone,
He follows Will, and thinks his Will his own;
Though by brute Inclinations only led,
Yet dread the Rage which comes not from the Head.

When wed remember, and preſerve with Care,
Theſe Maxims, always uſeful to the Fair;

That Beauty with Facility may gain;
But Prudence only can the Prize retain:
For ſlipp'ry Hearts, without exceeding Care,
Elude the Fetters of the faireſt *Fair*.
Beauty ſoon grows familiar to the Eye,
And then its Charms upon the Fancy die;
As quick as Lightning Execution gives,
And full as ſhort its ſpeedy Flaſhes lives.

THEN, if you'd give your Bliſs a laſting Date,
Excuſe ſlight Faults, and ne'er upbraid for great:
Regard Good Humour as your Golden Rule,
Which ne'er permits the human Heart to cool.
Upbraiding renders thoſe fine Features hard,
Which quickly melt before a juſt Regard.
Find Huſbands wrong, and prove it e'er ſo plain;
To prove their Pow'r, they'll ſoon be wrong again.
But wink at Wrongs, and ſeem to think them right;
In what you ſeem to think, they'll ſoon delight.
You win a Vaſſal with a radiant Eye;
His Chains you rivet with a ſoft Reply:

And when judiciouſly you Smiles employ,
He thinks his Bondage his ſupremeſt Joy;
Adores your Eyes, that ſent the poignant Dart,
But more your Temper, which allay'd the Smart.
But if your Frowns prevail when he complains,
Your Frowns relieve him, and unbind his Chains:
With harſh Replies, his Vaſſalage expires,
And Freedom boaſts her renovated Fires.

If in *one* Folly you by Chance delight,
He fancies *two* are his undoubted Right:
His Pow'rs as far again as yours extend,
And his refin'd Ambition has no End.
Then if you think your Follies are but few,
To be juſt twice as ſilly, is his due.
So, if you'd claim a Seat on Wiſdom's Throne,
To curb his Follies, firſt reform your own.

No Counſel give, as if you Counſel meant,
A mere Opinion may your Pride content:
Then humbly to his better Senſe ſubmit;
Men hate an Equal, or in Pow'r or Wit.

But all good Rules which Wiſdom can deviſe,
Or which Experience from her Hoard ſupplies,
In One Example are conſpicuous ſeen;
That Great Example is our Gracious QUEEN.

IMPUTED Errors I have diſapprov'd;
Clear'd up ſome Doubts, and ſome Miſtakes remov'd;
And hope each lordly Male will now confeſs
The Satire juſter, as the Malice leſs.
Farewell, my CHARLOTTE; read what's freely penn'd;
And let each Critic frown, if You commend.

FINIS.

But all good Rules which Wisdom can devise,
Or which Experience from her Hoard supplies,
In One Example are compleatly seen;
That Great Example is our Gracious QUEEN.

Imitate Her as I have whipp'd;
Clear'd up some Doubts, and some Mistakes remov'd;
And hope each lordly Male will now confess
The Satire juster, as the Malice less.
Farewell, my CHARLOTTE; read what's freely penn'd;
And let each Critic [illegible] Your command.

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FINIS